

When purchasing a piece of land or thinking about building or landscaping, one of the most important things to find out is the location of rights of way and easements.

Rights of Way

City-owned properties that are intended for public transportation (streets and sidewalks)

Easements

Privately owned properties in which a particular use has been granted to another party. The most common uses are for utilities such as water, sewer, gas, electrical, phone and cable. Other uses include storm water drainage and access roads.

Some of the most common violations of rights of way are:

- Installing basketball hoops
- Parking recreational vehicles
- Driving over or on sidewalks
- Building fences or rockeries

Some of the most common violations of easements are:

- Building of fences
- Placement of landscaping
- Building of permanent structures
- Destruction of drainage swales
- Covering of catch basins and manholes
- Blocking utility maintenance

Remember:

When easements have been granted or public rights-of-way have been violated, the cost of removal of obstacles can be placed upon the owner or violator.

The most reliable way of finding out where a public right-of-way is located is by contacting the Public Works Department at (360) 363-8100.

To find out whether a property contains any easements, the most reliable source of information can be found in your homeowner's title policy.

Also, before begin digging in areas that may contain any utilities, you should always call Dial-A-Dig at (800) 424-5555. This is a free service that notifies all the utility companies who will then come out and mark where their lines are located.